

Issue Brief – Waiting List Pilot

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

NUMBER DHS-07-13

WAITING LIST PILOT PROGRAM

The Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) is responsible for providing residential, day and family support services for people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. DSPD has a waiting list of 1,704 people on the “immediate needs” waiting list who are currently not receiving any services. (DSPD) is requesting one-time General Funds of \$150,000 for a pilot program aimed at individuals on the waiting list that are not critical.

OBJECTIVE

Each year, DSPD strives to reduce the waiting list. Total funding to eliminate the waiting list is \$23.3 million with \$8.3 million (35 percent) from General Funds and \$14.9 from federal Medicaid match.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

To receive services, people must have substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following life activities: self care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self direction, capacity for independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. The services provided range from limited family support to a full array of 24-hour services both in the community and at the Utah State Developmental Center. Services are also available in private Intermediate Care Facilities for people with Mental Retardation (ICF/MR) with funding through the Department of Health. Services in the ICF/MR system is an entitlement, meaning that if a person meets the eligibility requirements, services must be provided.

The State has chosen to provide an alternative to the ICF/MR system, which is the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver system. The HCBS includes a range of services and supports for people in homes and apartments, including full residential placements, located in community settings throughout the State. This system is also funded by Medicaid transfers through its waiver program. Unlike, ICF/MR, HCBS is not an entitlement for eligible persons, therefore, services are provided based on available resources. Since there are more eligible people desiring home and community based services under the Medicaid Waiver than there are resources available, the State has a waiting list for these services. The HCBS system is funded through DSPD, which determines eligibility for services in both the ICF/MR and the HCBS systems and serves as the “gatekeeper” for both systems.

DSPD is proposing a pilot program to provide job coaching and supported employment to about 100 individuals. The clients served in this program would not be brought into the Medicaid waiver services; therefore they would not qualify for federal matching funds. The goal of this pilot is to provide the services and eliminate those individuals at the bottom of the waiting list that need only limited services to be stabilized. Another purpose for this program is to help those individuals before their needs become critical.

In addition, there is legislation to establish a two-year pilot program for supported employment (H.B. 31, “Pilot Program for the Provision of Services with People with Disabilities”). This bill does not carry its own appropriation. A source of funding for this pilot could be non-lapsing funds since DSPD statutorily has non-lapsing authority (UCA 62A-5-102 (7)).

RECOMMENDATION

It is the recommendation of the Analyst that this pilot program be funded with \$75,000 of non-lapsing funds for FY 2007 (year one of the pilot). It is further the recommendation of the Analyst that the Division of Service for People with Disabilities submit a written report to the Health and Human Services Subcommittee by the 2007 General Session on the progress of the Waiting List Pilot Program.